

said Crawford Clarkson, a former Parker campaign chairman. "He was a sterling individual; an absolutely incorruptible politician."

# URGING THE NEW PRESIDENT TO SUPPORT THE BIPARTISAN SAFE COMMISSION ACT

**HON. FRANK R. WOLF**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 20, 2008

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, I have never been more concerned about the short- and long-term budget shortfalls we face as a Nation. These issues must be addressed simultaneously in a bipartisan way.

I share with our colleagues the letter I sent today to President-elect Barack Obama, urging him to adopt the SAFE Commission process as a way to provide a path toward a safe and secure economy for generations—a renaissance for America.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
WASHINGTON, DC, NOVEMBER 20, 2008.

Hon. BARACK OBAMA,  
Office of the President-elect,  
Chicago, IL.

DEAR PRESIDENT-ELECT OBAMA: As you prepare to take the oath of office as the 44th president of the United States, I want to congratulate you on your historic election, which has reminded the nation that America is indeed a land of boundless opportunity.

I write today because you face enormous challenges of change in building an administration in a time of economic turmoil and financial crisis for the American people. As syndicated columnist Robert Samuelson recently wrote, "The great project of the next president is to improve the economy's stability without subverting its vitality."

Recent congressional action aimed at shoring up the nation's financial system and restoring the flow of credit to help folks keep their homes or small businesses, get student loans or car loans, and protect the value in their retirement accounts I believe addresses only a symptom of a far greater financial crisis on the horizon. I voted for the financial rescue plan because I believed that immediate action was critical to restore confidence and stability in the Nation's financial system. I remain deeply concerned, however, not only by the debt burden nearing \$11 trillion, but also by the mounting deficit spending, predicted to reach \$1 trillion this fiscal year alone.

You are inheriting not only a short-term deficit and debt problem, but a looming long-term crisis former Comptroller General David Walker has characterized as "a financial tsunami that could swamp our ship of state." Mr. Walker, of course, is referring to the current \$53 trillion in unfunded obligations promised through Medicare, Social Security, and other entitlement programs which have skyrocketed from about one-third of the federal budget in 1965 to nearly two-thirds today. As if that amount were not difficult enough to comprehend, it is expected that when the new total is released in mid-December, it is likely to be over \$56 trillion. That means in just a year, spurred by soaring health care costs and retiring baby boomers, our Nation's unfunded commitments have jumped another \$3 trillion. It's noteworthy that the obligation of Medicare alone is 50 times the \$700 billion rescue bill.

I believe both short- and long-term budget shortfalls must be addressed simultaneously.

Yet I fear this daunting task is only part of the immense challenges of change our nation faces. I also continue to be alarmed that America is losing its competitive edge in the world economy. Once bustling U.S. cities and towns that were home to industrial and manufacturing bases are shuttered and crumbling.

On a drive across the old cast iron bridge linking downtown Trenton, New Jersey, with Morrisville, Pennsylvania, you will read the outdated slogan etched in rusted letters, "Trenton Makes, the World Takes." There was a time when Trenton made the steel used for the world's longest suspension bridges, its cars, and farm tools. But Trenton, like so many other U.S. centers of domestic manufacturing, today is a shell of its past. The slogan today could be, "The World Makes and America Takes."

And it's not only America's competitive edge that is dulling. The United States has always been the world's innovation leader, but we graduate half the number of physicists that we did in 1956—before Sputnik spurred America's last "great awakening" in science and engineering. I worry that the National Science Foundation reported that in 2004 China and India graduated 950,000 engineers compared to a meager 70,000 in the United States, and one-third to a half of those we graduate with science and engineering degrees are foreign students, and most will return to their home countries rather than applying their skills in the U.S. I worry that U.S. patents are down. I worry that our companies are spending more on tort litigation than on research and development.

How will we remain competitive, how will we rebuild our manufacturing base, how will our children compete in the global marketplace with the tsunami of mandatory spending obligations coming closer to our shores and the national debt racing past \$10 trillion? As the rate of mandatory spending grows, discretionary spending used to meet the needs and challenges of future generations shrinks. What will we tell our children when we can't afford to pay for a first-class education? Where will we find the money to rebuild the nation's infrastructure and transportation systems? What hope do we provide for American families touched by health care concerns and battling devastating diseases when we don't have funds for medical research to find cures for cancer, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, and autism? Not only is this unacceptable, I believe it raises serious moral questions. Is it right for one generation to live very well knowing that its debts are being passed on to its children and grandchildren?

Routinely increasing the amount of money the government can borrow without taking any action to stem the country's growing debt has been standard operating procedure in Congress. But the storm warning signs have been posted. Standard and Poor's Investment Service has projected that the U.S. could lose its triple-A bond rating as early as 2012, while Moody's delays its projection to 2018. It's hard to believe that the United States of America could be such a poor investment risk that it is poised to lose its gold standard rating.

As our nation's financial outlook erodes, we also are mortgaging the economic opportunity of future generations to countries like China and Saudi Arabia, two of the largest holders of U.S. debt. You may have seen The Washington Post report earlier this week that China now owns nearly \$1 out of every \$10 in U.S. public debt. Are we willing to allow China—a country that persecutes its own people because of their faith—or Saudi Arabia—which breeds the kind of radical ideology that led to the terrorist attacks on our country—to own what genera-

tions of Americans have worked so hard to build for their children and grandchildren? This is the same China linked to cybersecurity attacks on the computer systems in congressional offices and committees, in federal agencies and even at the White House.

How do we respond to these challenges of change? Where do we start? I bring to your attention one plan already in place. It has attracted the support of 111 bipartisan members of the House of Representatives and newspapers and think tanks across the political spectrum. I believe it is an idea upon which you can build with bold, courageous and bipartisan leadership.

Democrat Rep. Jim Cooper of Tennessee and I have teamed to offer legislation to create a national bipartisan commission to review the totality of our nation's financial future—entitlement spending, other federal spending and tax policy. This proposal differs significantly from other blue ribbon-type panels, however, because it has teeth and mandates action, similar to the base closing commission. After spending several months holding town hall meetings across the country, gathering comments and explaining the depths of America's current unsustainable financial problems, the commission will report back to Congress. The legislation requires Congress to vote up or down on the commission's recommended plan of action. The proposal is called the SAFE Commission—Securing America's Future Economy—and a companion effort has gained traction in the Senate.

While we have been encouraged with the support generated by the SAFE proposal, I have been disappointed that Congress continues to languish in the political divide while the financial tsunami edges closer. In 1968 songwriter Paul Simon wrote "The Boxer." You may recall its refrain: "Man hears what he wants to hear and disregards the rest." That could describe Congress's reaction, or lack thereof, to the financial crisis staring America square in the face. The American people deserve to know the truth, not just what we think they want to hear.

Your former colleague Senate Budget Chairman Kent Conrad, sponsor of the SAFE Commission idea in the Senate, said that he supported your candidacy because you are "somebody that reaches out to bring people together to get results," noting that "nobody is more responsible for that than the president of the United States. It starts at the top."

America is facing extraordinary challenges that call for extraordinary action. I worry about the future for my five children and 13 grandchildren and your two young children if we do not act now to make certain that America continues to be a land of boundless opportunity. I believe the SAFE concept can provide the outline of a plan that you as president could embrace in the 111th Congress which convenes in January. Enactment of the legislation setting up the commission during the first session next year would ensure a vote on the commission's recommendations during the second session in 2010. Your active support of the SAFE Commission effort in Congress would signal the critical immediacy of attacking this problem head on in the only way I believe it will be solved—by working together in a bipartisan way.

America is yearning for bipartisanship. With your leadership in reaching across the aisle of Congress to bring people together, I believe we can start down the path that will lead to a renaissance in America and ensure that the essential goodness of the United States endures.

I would be pleased to speak with you about the SAFE Commission plan, and I wish you Godspeed as you begin your presidency.

Sincerely,

FRANK R. WOLF,  
Member of Congress.

#### EARMARK DECLARATION

### HON. DAVID DAVIS

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 20, 2008*

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, pursuant to the Republican leadership standards on earmarks, I am submitting the following information for publication in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD regarding earmarks I received as part of H.R. 2638, the "Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance, and Continuing Appropriations Act of 2008."

The following project I requested was included in the legislation considered on the floor of the House:

Bill Number: H.R. 2638.

Account: Research Development Defense Wide, Industrial Preparedness.

Legal Name of Requesting Entity: Seaman Corporation.

Address of Requesting Entity: 1000 Venture Boulevard, Wooster, OH 44691.

Description of Request: I received an earmark in the amount of \$1,600,000 to continue a research and development project to develop a more reliable collapsible storage tank that will be utilized by our military for fuel and water distribution. Research and development will occur in Seaman facilities in Ohio and in Bristol, TN.

In recent years, the tanks being used by our military have consistently underperformed, and the Defense Logistics Agency is working with Seaman to develop fabrication technologies that will improve the performance capabilities of the tanks being produced. The money appropriated for this project will be utilized by: (1) identifying the manufacturing processes to ensure long-term performance that meets and/or exceeds current military application requirements, (2) establishing quality assurance procedures to ensure extended life performance dependability, and (3) providing field validation testing.

#### IN RECOGNITION OF JEFFERSON UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT TRUSTEE JEAN BRINK

### HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 20, 2008*

Ms. SPEIER. Madam Speaker, an era is coming to an end in the Jefferson Union High School District. Jean Brink, first elected in 1988, is retiring as a Trustee after 20 years of productive and selfless service.

Like so many in public service, Jean first got involved as an active and concerned parent. Her two children, Adam and Laura, attended the District's Oceana High School, where Jean quickly became as well-known as her son and daughter.

In five straight elections, the voters of the Jefferson Union High School District returned

Jean to office, relying on her level head, passionate commitment to education and keen understanding of the School District's greater role in the community.

Madam Speaker, Jean is the kind of public servant that we could all take a lesson from. While overseeing the modernization of district schools and facilities and working for the passage of two bond measures, Jean remained vigilant against waste and abuse and always kept a watchful eye on the taxpayers' hard-earned money.

Jean Brink earned the title "Trustee" because "trust" is what Jean is all about. As a board member, she guided the District through difficult economic times while always making sure that the needs of students were foremost on the minds of administrators. While committed to the basics, she understood that high school is one of the last times that many students have a chance to participate in artistic endeavors. She has been a strong supporter of art, music and drama programs, not just by providing financial and administrative support, but by attending nearly every band concert, school play and art show produced in the district for the last 20 years. Madam Speaker, a generation of students benefitted from Jean Brink's service. We will miss her, but she has certainly earned her retirement. Jean can now spend more time on her other interests, including swimming and volunteering for such worthwhile projects as the Oceana Natatorium's ceramic mural and the Pacifica School Volunteers.

We all know how much time public office takes away from one's family. I want to thank Jean's supportive husband, John Brink for loaning his talented and remarkable wife to the community. Son and daughter-in-law John and Kristin Brink and daughter and son-in-law Laura and Doug Ritenour will, no doubt, love having more time with Jean, but I have a feeling the person who will benefit most from Jean's newfound free time is her precious and adorable granddaughter, Serena Ritenour.

#### HONORING JUNE W. BUTTERFIELD

### HON. SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 20, 2008*

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor June W. Butterfield, who is the recipient of the 2008 Experience Works Prime Time Award for Outstanding Older Workers.

Experience Works strives to improve the lives of older people through employment and community service. 2008 marks the eleventh year Experience Works is leading this national, yearlong initiative that recognizes remarkable individuals 65 and older who continue to make valuable contributions in the workplace.

This year's recipient from the state of West Virginia is June W. Butterfield, an office manager for the West Virginia Board of Risk and Insurance Management in Charleston. Working since she was 18, June started in the private sector but has been a government employee in one form or another for the past 38 years. The constant challenges and opportunities to become more efficient are what keep June so motivated. Her co-workers recognize this effort and praise her positive attitude in

the office. A former competitive runner, June is a big advocate of staying healthy and encourages her colleagues to stay fit. She encourages all older people to keep working, saying "it keeps you young."

It is an honor to represent this outstanding woman who serves as a strong leader and excellent role model for older women in her community. Congratulations to June W. Butterfield as the recipient of the 2008 Experience Works Prime Time Award for Outstanding Older Workers.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF DARWIN WIEKAMP OF MISHAWAKA, INDIANA

### HON. JOE DONNELLY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 20, 2008*

Mr. DONNELLY. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor the life of Darwin Wiekamp, a hard-working businessman and lifelong community philanthropist. Mr. Wiekamp died at his home in Mishawaka, Indiana on the morning of November 13, 2008 at the age of 94.

In 1936, 22-year old Wiekamp married his wife of 72 years, Dorothy. His business career as an area banker began a few years later in 1945, when he and a friend founded the Owners Discount Corporation in Elkhart, Indiana with a vision to serve customers who were ignored by other banks. Their corporation specialized in small loans for cars and new businesses.

For the next several years, Wiekamp implemented aggressive lending programs to his less fortunate community members, and in 1966 Owners Discount purchased West End State Bank of Mishawaka. Wiekamp's bank continued to grow enormously, changing names several times, until it finally became National City Bank. By the time Wiekamp retired, his initial \$64,000 capital had turned into a financial corporation that today is worth hundreds of millions of dollars. His ceaseless hard work, willingness to take risks, and dedication to serving his community are qualities that every businessman should strive to emulate.

As a philanthropist in our community, Wiekamp led campaigns to raise money for public television, St. Joseph Hospital, and the South Bend Center for the Homeless. His financial generosity also helped support healthcare and the arts in the form of the Schwartz-Weikamp Clinic in Mishawaka and an auditorium at the Center for History. With the help of nine other community businessmen, Wiekamp also organized and founded Mishawaka Futures Industrial Park, which today is home to twenty small businesses and hundreds of jobs.

Friends and fellow businessmen remember Wiekamp as "enormously generous in the community," "a great guy with a good sense of humor," and a "tough competitor and good golfer." But what Wiekamp will be most remembered for is his commitment to educational causes and community development. He and Dorothy helped fund Wiekamp Hall at Indiana University South Bend, the primary classroom building on campus, housing five computer labs, a language lab, sixteen classrooms, faculty and administrative offices, and a 150-seat lecture hall. They also helped finance the IUSB art gallery and more than thirty scholarships for students at the school.